



COMMISSION ON AGING

COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes

July 25, 2016

PRESIDING: Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

Members Attending

Jennifer Asher
Reg Avery
Angie Boyter
Pete Brunner
Barbara Catlin
Susan Hailman
Jan Horan
Julia Mattis
Andrew Monjan
Eletta Morse
SK Shin
Michael Willis

Not Present

Debbie Fleischmann
Bob McLaughlin

Office on Aging and Independence

Starr Sowers
Ingrid Gleysteen

Department of Community Resources and Services

Phyllis Madachy

Howard County Police Department

Andre Lingham

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Approve Agenda

Angie Boyter moved to accept the agenda, and Reg Avery seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

Approve Minutes

Jennifer Asher clarified that the two pools in Western Howard County aren't just used by private groups, they are privately owned pools. Angie Boyter moved to accept the amended minutes of the previous meeting, and Reg Avery seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services

Phyllis Madachy offered the Commission an overview of the changes happening in the Department of Community Resources and Services, formerly the Department of Citizen Services. Following a year of review and recommendations, changes to the Department were put into place the last week of June. The new names of the Department and Offices are more accessible and easier to understand. The Department operates with three core values: services are provided are multigenerational, services meet diverse cultural needs and full inclusion and community engagement for those with disabilities is supported.

The Department has grown from three offices to seven; five Offices with appointed administrators and two offices that report to the deputy director.

DCRS Offices:

Office of ADA Coordination

Office on Aging and Independence

Office of Children and Families

Office of Community Partnerships

Office of Consumer Protection

Office of the Local Children's Board

Office of Veterans and Military Families

In addition, the Department will work closely with their seven Boards and Commissions, listed below.

Board to Promote Self Sufficiency

Commission on Aging

Commission on Disability Issues

Commission for Veterans and Military Families

Commission for Women

Consumer Affairs Advisory Board

Local Children's Board

Following questions from the Commission, Phyllis clarified several points.

- The Office of the Local Children's Board (name may change to the Local Management Board) was created to support new initiatives of County Administration and to support changing priorities of the Governor's Office for Children.
- While there was initially discussion of bringing some programs from the Department of Housing into DCRS, this was not approved. While the Housing Commission was moved out of the Department of Housing, the remaining staff members remain in their own department.
- The Creating an Age Friendly Community report continues to drive the actions of the Office on Aging and Independence and work is still moving forward on implementation. While Phyllis is retiring, she will stress the importance of collaboration on the plan and its implementation to her successor.

Paws4Comfort

Ingrid Gleysteen presented on the Office on Aging and Independence's Paws4Comfort Program, which provides regular visits by a family pet and its owner to individuals who may be socially isolated or unable to interact with others. The person visited is usually a nursing home resident or enrolled in a program for adults or children with physical or intellectual disabilities. Some partner programs use the handler/pet teams in a therapeutic setting. The program has existed in Howard County since 1982 and currently has approximately 120 volunteers visiting more than 30 community partners. The program operates with a combination of county funding and donations, which are collected via the Community Foundation of Howard County.

In order to participate in the program, a screening is conducted to assess the pet's physicality and temperament. Pets must be certified by a veterinarian. Owners attend a volunteer training to familiarize themselves with the program as well as the types of locations they will be visiting.

Committee Reports

Caregiving

Barbara Catlin reported that the Caregiving Committee is thinking of outside-the-box ways to identify caregivers, including contacting schools or PTA organizations to identify teenaged caregivers. The Committee will be speaking with Kathy Wehr, the Caregiver Program Manager to avoid duplication of efforts.

Additionally the Committee suggested increased collaboration between Howard County General Hospital and the Office on Aging and Independence during discharges, especially when a caregiver is involved.

Government Relations

S.K. Shin reported that the main issue identified by the Committee was transportation. The Committee suggested new marketing ideas for transportation services like including information in water bills/property tax bills. Additionally the Committee supports the SeniorRide proposal put forth by Bob McLaughlin last year and stressed that the program aligned with both the Creating an Age-Friendly Community Plan and the addition of "independence" to the Office's name. The Committee would like to further examine how other jurisdictions approach transportation and report back.

Health and Wellness

Andrew Monjan shared the discussions from the second meeting of the Health and Wellness Committee. The Committee shared three main themes from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's report "Meeting the Dietary Needs of Older Adults: Exploring the Impact of the Physical, Social, and Cultural Environment: Workshop Summary:"

- 1) Older adults are not being served well by retailers, customer services, or the products
- 2) Navigation in shops can be a real challenge and the supercenter shops that are increasingly common are not designed well for older adults
- 3) Product packaging is still a big problem as older adults have difficulty opening, reading and using packages.

In light of the report and given the increasing popularity of pre-packaged food delivery services, the Committee makes the following suggestions:

- 1) Howard County's Roving Radish could increase its delivery sites to include 50+ housing communities.
- 2) The Village in Howard could arrange to purchase in bulk with one or more the food delivery vendors to provide food/discounts to its members.
- 3) CSAs could arrange to provide smaller produce packages for households of one or two people.
- 4) The Office on Aging and Independence could work to increase the publicizing of the schedule and locations of farmers markets and CSAs.

The Committee would also like to see the Local Health Improvement Coalition's one-page information sheets available in 50+ centers. Additionally, the Office could explore internship or volunteer programs to use high school students to mentor older adults on computer/internet functions in the 50+ Centers.

Housing and Aging in Place

Susan Hailman began by sharing the Committee's goal: to document, assess and promote the options and incentives that will lead to expanding options for realistic and life-affirming aging in place for Howard County residents. The Committee hopes to achieve this goal by tracking the follow-through on the recommendations of PlanHoward 2030 and Planning for the Growth of the Older Adult Population in Howard County as well as by creating greater awareness in the general public about the options older residents most support.

50+EXPO

Andrew Monjan updated the Commission on plans for the 50+EXPO booth. The Committee is planning on using a trifold display to help draw attendees into conversation. The COA's brochure will need to be updated and reprinted prior to EXPO. The scheduling request email will come from Andrew at the beginning of October.

Howard County Police Department

Andre Lingham shared that the burglary rate in Howard County is currently equal to the 1974 rate; he will provide a more substantial listing of crime statistics at the next meeting.

Andre also shared the struggle the Police Department faces in informing older adults about scams. Even with the best information the Department can provide, older adults continue to fall for scams like the foreign lottery scam. Andre and the Department will be considering different ways to make the public more aware of common scams.

Budget and Policy

Angie Boyter and Pete Brunner presented on the Livable Homes Tax Credit, which is currently not felt to be reaching its full potential. The Budget and Policy Committee examined standards for 55+ communities and has suggested possible changes to the legislation.

Suggested changes:

- 1) Remove permitting requirement and instead require a paid invoice to prove work has been completed.
- 2) Expand the list of eligible renovations to include:
 - a. accessible path from parking to home,
 - b. no-step access at any entrance,
 - c. railings for interior or exterior stairs or redesign of open staircases,
 - d. hallways at least 36" wide,
 - e. creation of master bed/bath on the first floor,
 - f. lever handles on interior and exterior doors,
 - g. smooth transitions between rooms,
 - h. slip-resistant flooring,
 - i. lever handles on kitchen and bathroom sinks/showers,
 - j. anti-scald devices on plumbing fixtures,
 - k. relocation of switches/doorbells/thermostats/and breaker boxes,
 - l. closet renovations for accessibility.

Angie moved that the Commission endorse the repeal of the building permit requirement and to approve the expanded list of projects eligible for the credit for submission to County Councilmember John Weinstein. Reg Avery seconded the motion. *All in favor. Motion approved.*

Chair's Report

Willging Endowment

Sharonlee shared that Commissioners were in favor of supporting the Willging Endowment with a \$100 donation and allowing the Endowment to use the COA's logo.

Pete Brunner moved that the COA approve a one-time \$100 donation to the Willging Endowment. Barbara Catlin seconded the motion. *All in favor. Motion approved.*

Upcoming Presentations

Sharonlee will be scheduling speaker to discuss living wills, advanced directives, durable powers of attorney and MOLST forms.

COA Member Handbook

Sharonlee only received one requested change. She will work with the Office to finalize the handbook.

Office on Aging Report

Starr Sowers shared that the upcoming Caregiver Guide will include a 2-page article on the Livable Homes Tax Credit.

The Office is currently interviewing for both a Maryland Access Point Information Specialist and a Guardianship Program Manager.

The new Kindred Spirits Program at North Laurel will open on August 2, 2016.

Senior Issues Heard (Sharing from Commissioners)

Reg Avery reported that Columbia Association is beginning to examine its swimming facilities as they are aging and some may need to be closed. Reg will keep the Commission updated on this effort.

Jennifer Asher shared that the Washington Post featured an article on caregiving from the author of Being My Mom's Mom, which offered great practical advice.

Eletta Morse shared that reporting fraudulent calls and registering for the do not call list does not seem to be effective.

Barbara Catlin reported that revised restrictions on opioids have placed an additional stress on both patients and caregivers.

SK Shin shared wise advice-start to downsize early!

Pete Brunner shared that the Village in Howard has received a grant from Columbia Association to help with payroll costs. The Village is looking for new office space; they need to be in a new facility by October 1.

Angie Boyter shared concerns from a neighbor about the design of the new central library: (excerpted below)

“I wish today’s architects and businesses would start to understand that an aging population and their caregivers do not need medical facilities, libraries and other services that are heavily used by seniors tucked away within artificial streets, with large expansive plazas and entryways with no places to sit, with huge lobbies and atriums that double the distance from curb to door, or, even if one is still able to drive, with handicap parking that is still a long way to the front door? Even if Mom takes a community-provided van ride, she’s stuck once she gets off the van because the front door is too far away, thus chilling her desire to go to events (think of the Horowitz Center or even the George Howard County Building). I also often have to drop Mom at the curb (because the handicapped parking is too far for her to walk and I cannot double park to accompany her in), so she is stuck standing there waiting (some times in the rain) or tentatively making her way as far as she can, with no benches, handrails or other items to help her feel safe and sure-footed.”

Andrew Monjan shared some observations from the Alzheimer’s Association’s International Conference. He also shared that Lumosity had fines levied against them by the FTC as there is no data to support their claims.

Michael Willis shared that the COA’s Legislative Breakfast will be held October 11. After attending the Loan Closet ribbon-cutting, he shared a picture on his personal Facebook page and received a number of comments and questions; he stressed this would be a good marketing tool for the Office.

Jan Horan is planning to volunteer at Senior Day at the Fair. Additionally she suggests the Office look into creating a brochure for realtors to make them more aware of services provided as this is a missing piece of

publicizing the work of the Office. Jan also suggested a retreat between all of the boards and commissions associated with the Department of Community Resources and Services to better understand roles and foster collaboration.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

Eletta Morse motioned to adjourn. Michael Willis seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Recording Secretary: Jennifer Rittenhouse

Next Meeting: August 22, Ellicott City 50+ Center, 7pm